

Summary 11/16/2011  
7PM  
Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange  
CRERPA Office  
455 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, CT

Attendees:

Kristin Elliott Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust  
Gail Reynolds – Haddam Land Trust  
Melvin Woody – Ct River Land Trust  
Wini Olson – Essex Land Trust  
Mark Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust  
Tom Elliott – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust  
Rob Smith – East Haddam Land Trust  
John Kennedy – Deep River Land Trust  
Meg Parulis – Westbrook Town Planner  
Stanford Brainerd – Lynde Point Land Trust  
Dave Kozak – CT DEP

The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE) was visited by Meg Parulis, Westbrook Town Planner to discuss the possibilities of creating a regional greenway from Stuart B. McKinney Fish and Wildlife Preserve located in the southwest coastal area of Westbrook north through the Menunketesuck Watershed and Cockaponset State Forest through the towns of Deep River, Killingworth, Chester, and Haddam. The 15 mile multimodal Quinimay Trail runs through Cockaponset Forest from Weber Woods at Messerschmidt's Pond in northern Westbrook to Swain Johnson Trail off of Walkley Hill Rd. in Haddam, a couple of miles from Higganum center and 3 miles from the intersection at Seven Falls picnic area on Rt. 154 with the Metacomet, Monadnock, Mattabesett New England National Scenic Trail. Discussion concerned a regional greenway designation that would combine to promote the Quinimay Trail and public recreational opportunities afforded by the Cockaponset State Forest but also protects the upland forest resource and its associated salt and fresh water tidal wetlands and the region's public water supply. The economic development aspect of the proposal as it concerned eco-tourism and possible small business development within the region was also favorably discussed. The watershed and forested corridor has been identified as an important fly way and diadromous fish run, particularly for the alewife. The group agreed to support the further consideration of this idea with further outreach to the associated conservation commissions, as well as the DEEP.

Stanford Brainerd reported on a meeting held at the Haddam Neck Fire Station concerning the Silvio Conte Fish and Wildlife Preserve, its new Salmon River Division, and creating a Friends of Conte group specific to this new division. That day Conte had purchased the Pine Brook Preserve located nearby over the border in East Hampton and a piece of the Roger Tory Peterson Preserve in Old Lyme. Fish and Wildlife is looking for acquisitions in the lower River area for the next fiscal year. It is hoped by many that in the future Conte would be able to purchase the Ct Yankee site. Discussion concerned the LTE becoming a member of the Friends of Conte.

Amy Paterson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) gave an update of this year's legislative agenda which included:

1. Open Space Funding:

- Campaign for annual state funding and consistent grant rounds for the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program.
- Community Investment Act (CIA): Continue to raise awareness of the importance of the fund and work to ensure that the integrity and level of funding are protected. Enacted with tremendous bipartisan support in 2005, the CIA provides increased funding for state programs for open space, farmland/dairy production, historic properties and affordable housing.
- Larger Open Space Funding Effort: Pursue dialogue with DEEP administration on a long term strategy for open space funding, based upon other state models for funding and land trust capacity building.

2. Permanent Protection of State-Owned Conservation Lands: Work with our conservation partners on the research and outreach to administrators and legislators for a possible administrative and/or legislative fix in response to the issues raised by the Haddam land swap.

3. Community Green Fund: Continue dialogue and research on legislation which would enable, but not require, towns to enact a conveyance fee on buyers of real estate, with the revenue from the program placed in a local dedicated fund for conservation purposes.

4. Protected Lands Registry: Work with the Working Lands Alliance and other partners to create a registry to inventory/track land protected by land trusts and municipalities.

5. Federal Policy: Support Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program, Farm Bill and other priorities and continue to engage Connecticut land conservation community in outreach efforts.

B. Conservation Community Outreach

1. Work with land trusts in hosting conservation site visits for local and federal legislators
2. Attend land trust board meetings and other events to discuss legislative priorities
3. Organize a Conservation Lobby Day during the legislative session

The group agreed that they would support inclusion on a map showing collaborative groups that are working on forest issues and conservation on the 2011 Forest Forum being held at Yale University's Kroon Hall. The group took a preliminary look and discussion at the Lower Ct River and Coastal Forest Stewardship Initiative initial survey as well as the inclusion of the CT River in the Dept. of the Interior's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The next meeting will be held January 18<sup>th</sup>.